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**MBDA Forms Strategic Partnership
with the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Foundation**
*MBDA National Director will speak at the 2006 USHCC
Convention in Philadelphia, PA on September 21*

PHILADELPHIA, PA—The Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) today announced it will form a new partnership with the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Foundation (USHCC) to join efforts in analyzing and developing economic data and identifying more procurement opportunities for the nation's 1.6 million Hispanic businesses.

"Hispanic Americans are playing an ever-expanding role in setting the direction of our country with Hispanic businesses as one of the fastest growing segments of the U.S. economy," said National Director of the Minority Business Development Agency Ronald Langston. "Our innovative and entrepreneurial spirit is thriving in America, and I look forward to working with the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Foundation.

As part of the MBDA-USHCC Foundation partnership, MBDA will be a member of the Foundation's Council of Economic Advisors, which will set the Foundation's research and collaborative agenda. Input will be gathered at the "Call for Collaboration" plenary session at the USHCC Convention on Thursday, September 21, 2006 in Philadelphia, PA. MBDA National Director Ronald N. Langston will be a key member of the plenary session on that day.

"I am pleased to announce the collaboration between the United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce (USHCC) Foundation and the Minority Development Business Agency (MBDA) to advocate and work together to ensure that procurement and business policy gaps that impact Hispanic businesses are closed and that the entrepreneurship spirit of the Hispanic community is fully achieved", says Massey Villarreal, USHCC Foundation Chair.

The Hispanic growth rate is three times the national average. Hispanic-owned businesses are one of the fastest growing segments of the U.S. economy, growing 31 percent between 1997 and 2002 — also three times the national average for all businesses. The nation's 1.6 million Hispanic-owned businesses generated nearly \$222 billion in revenue, up 19 percent since 1997.

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About the Minority Business Development Agency, US Department of Commerce
Founded in 1971 and headquartered in Washington, DC, the Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) is part of the U.S. Department of Commerce. MBDA is the only federal agency created specifically to foster the establishment and growth of minority-owned businesses in this Nation. The Agency actively promotes the growth and competitiveness of large, medium and

small minority business enterprises by offering management and technical assistance through a network of forty local business centers throughout the United States.